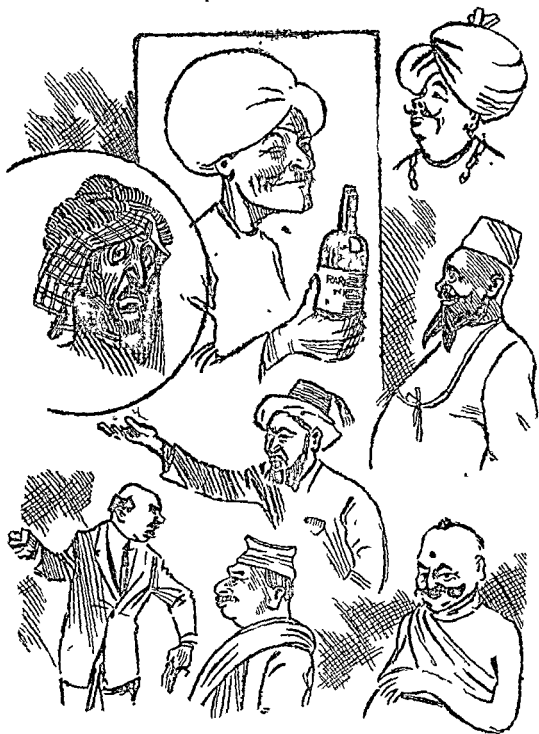


HUMOURS OF INDIA.



FACES I HAVE KNOWN

HUMOURS OF INDIA.

BEING SKETCHES OF
EVERY-DAY PHASES OF
LIFE IN INDIA.



BY

Roy Simmonds.

PRINTED AT
THE "ADVOCATE OF INDIA" PRINTING PRESS,
BOMBAY.

PRINTED FOR THE PUBLISHER ROY SIMMONDS,
BY T. F. GORDON AND CO. AT THE "ADVOCATE OF INDIA" PRESS,
DALAL STREET, FORT, BOMBAY.

CONTENTS.

	Page.
(<i>Faces I Have Known</i>)	Frontispiece.
The New Arrival	1
The Tailor	3
Your Boy	5
Brown Babies	7
The Barber	9
Golf	11
The Gharri	13
The Shikari	15
An Everyday Tragedy	17
The Dhobi	19
The Monsoon	21
A Burrakhana	23
Housemaids	25
The Shoe-maker	27
The Native Policeman	29
Native Bazaar	31
The Milkmaid	33
Cockroaches	35
A Nautch	37
Sweetmeat Makers	39
Spring Cleaning	41
Racing	43
An Evening Rest	45
The Ayah	47
Dancing	49
Dog Chokras	51
The Mistri	53
Furniture Vans	55
Going Home	57

FOR THE NEW ARRIVAL.

Baksheesh	Gratuity.
Bhistewallah	Water-carrier.
Biddee	Native cigarette.
Buckra	Goat.
Budmashis	Rogues.
Burrakhana	Big dinner.
Chokra	Youngster.
Chota Hazri	Early breakfast.
Chota Peg	Small whisky & soda.
Dhall	An Indian grain.
Dhobi	Washerman.
Dhoti	Loin-cloth.
Gharri	Victoria.
Ghee	Indian lard.
Hajam	Barber.
Hamal	Male "house-maid."
Huzoor	Highness.
Khali	Plain, only.
Mali	Gardener.
Mistri	Cook.
Muchi	Boot-maker.
Munshi	Teacher.
Pani	Water.
Pan-supari	Betel-nut.
Pukka	Thorough, genuine.
Pagar	Wages.
Serang	Bo'sun.
Shikari	Sportsman.
Sigri	Charcoal-stove.
Tiffin	Lunch.
Topee	Hat.

BY WAY OF EXPLANATION.

THESE sketches were originally produced in the "Advocate of India," and they have been republished in book form partly at the request of several readers of that paper, and partly because there may be a little money attached to the venture !

Of the short-comings of both illustration and text I am painfully aware, and my great and unappeased regret is that I have not the pen of a Mark Twain or the pencil of a Phil May ! What an imperishable work two such Masters, working in conjunction, might have produced for our ever-lasting delight ! India is over-running with material for the humorous black-and-white artist, and it is extraordinary to me that there is so little of this work to be found.

Europeans in India are critical, but I do not mind that. Criticise as much as you like, but do not, I pray you, misunderstand me. There are no sly digs levelled herein at anybody or any particular class. The whole aim of the book is merely to raise a stray smile, not of cynicism, but of amusement.

I am indebted to the Editor of the "Advocate" for allowing me to republish the sketches, and I have to thank various kind friends for the assistance they have rendered me. For a certain Chummery, (where many of the ideas for the sketches originated) and for the members thereof, I express my warm regard. May our future experiences be as happy as those of the past. I have to thank both Press and Public for their very kind reception of the book, which has necessitated the issue of a third edition within six months.

BOMBAY, May, 1914.



THE NEW ARRIVAL.

THE new comer's arrival in India may be more of a tragedy than a humour to him, but to the old stager he presents certain quaint features

Do you remember the first day you arrived in Bombay? If you found the tiny stuffy cabin distasteful to you, and slept on deck, you will probably recall being disturbed by the trampling of feet and the noise of ropes and chains dragged about. Opening a lazy eye you found it was still dark. A big green light illumined the blackness to the left and you probably guessed that it emanated from a lighthouse or a beacon. Later on you were destined to get to know that 'creme de menthe' light pretty well. Then, sleep being out of the question, you arose and made your toilet, and came back to the deck to find day breaking. There lay Bombay! What were your thoughts of your new home?

A thick pall of smoky vapour enveloped the low lying town like a blanket, and rolled slowly and sluggishly away before the onslaught of the rising sun. Then you observed the beauties of the harbour, the mountainous little islands to the right, the gay shipping, the sun dancing on the water, the spires and towers of the buildings of the town.

A steam launch took you to Ballard Pier. If you had listened to the valuable advice of friends at Home whose ocean voyages extended no further than a trip on the 'husbands' boat to Margate, you would be suitably arrayed. A topee of remarkable architecture ornamented your classic brow. The head gear was purchased in London under the skilled supervision of the wily shopman, or else was obtained at Port Said. In either event it was worthy of a place in a museum. It had, if you remember, an enormous brim as big as a foot bath, and rose in tiers to the apex, each tier being punctuated with ventilation apertures like the port holes of a ship. Of course you had a green lined white umbrella, and a pair of black glasses, while your outfit was completed by a nondescript flannel suit, and a pair of canvas shoes too large for you. People at Home insisted that you should get roomy foot-covering as they knew the heat made your feet swell.

It was rather confusing when you landed, wasn't it? Swarms of brown skinned people with coloured turbans and divided petticoats (later you knew them as dhotis) clustered round you, all yelling in a strange tongue and expectorating red juice. Most of them wanted to carry your bag, some, rather more dressed than the rest, showed hotel cards in front of your face, others, horrible looking things, asked for *baksheesh*, and yet others apparently crowded round merely to have a look at you.

To your surprise you noticed that most of your fellow passengers, who were returning from leave had not made caricatures of themselves, but were dressed in ordinary English fashion, with unobtrusive topees. Then you began to wonder whether your untravelled friends in London had not misled you as to the regulation attire for the tropics.

You have not forgotten, have you? how impressed you were with an imposing fellow with a bushy beard and a long blue coat smothered in gold lace. You took him to be a rajah, at least, and were flabbergasted when he saluted before an insignificant little second class passenger, and accepting his stick and book, followed meekly behind him like the servant he was!

Perhaps, after all you did not commit all these solecisms, but the picture is not so greatly over drawn when applied to some people you know, is it?



THE NEW ARRIVAL

THE TAILOR.

UNFORTUNATELY one must wear clothes, but were fashion not so arbitrary in this direction there would be much saving to tempers and pocket. It would be almost as exhilarating to be minus one's nether garments as minus the tailor's bills.

The native tailor is always an optimist—he is always ready to make the finest suit of clothes at the lowest possible price, in the shortest time. That his performances do not always tally with his promises never seems to occur to the blandly smiling gentleman. Even when you abuse him for giving you a 40-inch waist, when it should be 30, he doesn't try to excuse himself by putting the blame on the clerk or the gentleman who carves up the cloth. No, he merely says, "All right, Sahib, make it change," meaning that he will effect the necessary alterations.

You send your boy round in two days' time and he comes back with the article untouched. You take it back, with strong epithets. The same thing happens and at about the sixth visit the tailor gets genuinely concerned that the waist line still remains ten inches too big. He makes a supreme effort, and removes fifteen inches of cloth, so that you cannot possibly make the top buttons meet. The trousers go to swell your boy's wardrobe and fit him nicely. Can there have been a deep-laid plot between him and the tailor? Perish the thought!



“QUITE GOOD FIT, SAHIB, PUCCAT FIT”

THE TAILOR.

YOUR BOY.

A "BOY" is indispensable to you in India. Although called a boy his age may be anything from ten years up to a hundred.

He is your devoted servant who brings you your chota hazri in the morning (generally omitting the tea in the tea-pot, but seldom forgetting the pani), and while you are away at office he looks after your interests by squatting on the pavement in another street, smoking biddees. He gets your clothes ready for you in the evening, supplying a striped shirt to go with a dinner-jacket together with a pair of flannel trousers, while he takes great care to put your studs back to front in your shirt and leaves ornamental black marks in so doing.

He waits upon you at table, standing at the back of your chair, and breathing down your neck. He can go to sleep comfortably in the position and never needs to be told more than half a dozen times to remove your plate. Sometimes bright ideas strike him, and he will add a raspberry cream soda to your chota peg while you are otherwise engaged.

He comes to you with glowing references, from Colonels, Bishops and Commissioners in different parts of India, all written on similar paper in the same hand. He is generally a financier, and you regard with amused equanimity the almost childish delight he takes in making out little bills for soap, buttons, and boot polish.

His occupations during the few brief moments he allows himself of leisure are spent in intellectual talk with kindred souls, when he will enlarge on the magnificence of his pagoda and the god-like virtues of his master.



YOUR BOY.

BROWN BABIES.

AT every turn in India one comes across the little naked kiddy, with shining forehead, and distended stomach, who smilingly requests a gratuity. The fact that his costume consists merely of a piece of string and an anklet worries him not at all, and he will trot along at one's side in the most crowded and fashionable thoroughfares, completely unabashed, repeating his monotonous request for baksheesh.

In the mofussil he soon sets up in business, and the tiniest toddler will waddle up and offer the visitor a match box containing a gaudy green 'beetlee' for the modest sum of four pies.

Of course, I know I have an unnatural and perverted taste (I say it now to save Memsahibs the trouble of telling me so later on) but somehow, little brown babies make a much stronger appeal to me than little white ones. A white baby is uninteresting, and generally suffers from a liver. If not, why is it always so peevish? A brown baby, on the other hand, is invariably cheerful and contented. I defy you to show me one white baby that wouldn't raise Cain if it were carried in the way a coolie woman carries her baby. There are no "prams" or go carts, or whatever the things are called for the brown kiddy. When it is taken for a walk it is given a rather precarious position on its mother's hip.

Then look how simple are its wants. No nursery, and toys, and picture books for the dusky lad, bless you, it scorns them. We will assume mother holds an honourable position in the building trade, and has to support a whole tribe of relations, in addition to keeping papa in buiddees. When she goes to work she takes the little one with her, dumps it on the foot path, and reminds it to ask for baksheesh when a Sahib passes. Mother thereafter is busy for the day, carrying bricks about and doing a labourer's work generally, but the temporarily abandoned infant doesn't mind, it doesn't howl, and it doesn't get lost.

It sets about to have a rollicking game with a few lumps of coal and some nice sticky mud, and when it gets tired of doing a little building on its own account, it makes a hearty meal off its toys.

The brown baby, in fact, in the technical language of the nursery, is "as good as gold," and very much commoner.



"BAKSHEESH, MEMSAHIB, US VERY POOR MEN!"

THE MATUTINAL BARBER.

THE energetic man shaves himself; the lazy man lets the barber do the needful. If he is encouraged to speak, the Indian barber can be just as loquacious as his English prototype, but, generally speaking, he arrives while you are asleep, noiselessly strops your razor and lathers your face, and having removed the hirsute growth, departs as silently as he came.

Later on, your boy arrives with the chota hazri, and you awake with a feeling of relief that the operation has been performed and that your face is smooth and presentable. If you happen to awake while the hajam is engaged in lathering on the soap, the process is quite soothing, providing you banish from your mind the idea that a damp frog is perambulating over your physiognomy.

The barber is a quaint little chap, with a huge red turban, and a white coat, while to the uninitiated the species appears to be suffering from hip disease. A close examination of the large protuberance visible in that spot, however, shows that it is the wallet containing his tools, worn under his coat, that causes the unnatural swelling.

The barber learns many secrets while he is caressing his patient's face with the brush. The sahib murmurs many things in his half-waking, half-dreaming moments of which he repents when he awakens to full consciousness, and sees the dusky visage of the barber bending over him.

The barber is always ready to massage you if you so desire. He spreads ointment on his large brown palms and attacks your face with the energy of a pugilist. He wrestles with those lines on your brow, fights stubbornly with your nose, and having almost gouged out your eyes, he emerges the victor of the contest by suddenly twisting your head to the right or left. By giving it a terrific pull he dislocates your whole spinal column. He likes to hear the "click" of the bones. Having satisfied himself that your neck is not really broken, he departs before you have time to recover, and before you can exact vengeance.



THE MATUTINAL BARBER.

GOLF IN THE EAST.

GOLF is very popular amongst Europeans in India, and this is rather curious because they one and all hate walking. Ask them to go for a stroll before breakfast, and they will look at you pityingly, but if you suggest a round of golf, they will walk miles without a murmur.

There is little difference in the game as played in India and that indulged in at Home, but there are a few points of variance. For instance, the golfer does not have on his conscience the thought that he is corrupting the caddy's morals when he gives vent to his feelings on topping his drive. The caddy, or, as he is called here, the *chokra*, has such a limited knowledge of English that the sahib's expletives are double Dutch to him. In the rare cases where the *chokra* does know English he is generally such a case-hardened young sinner that there still need be no fear of corruption, for he can easily outstrip the sahib when it comes to a matter of forceful language.

The hot sun renders the gorgeous red coats and "heather mixtures" so popular with the golfing knut at Home, unendurable in India, and shirts, open at the throat, and "shorts," constitute the regulation attire. It is because this dress is so comfortable that some people want to change it.

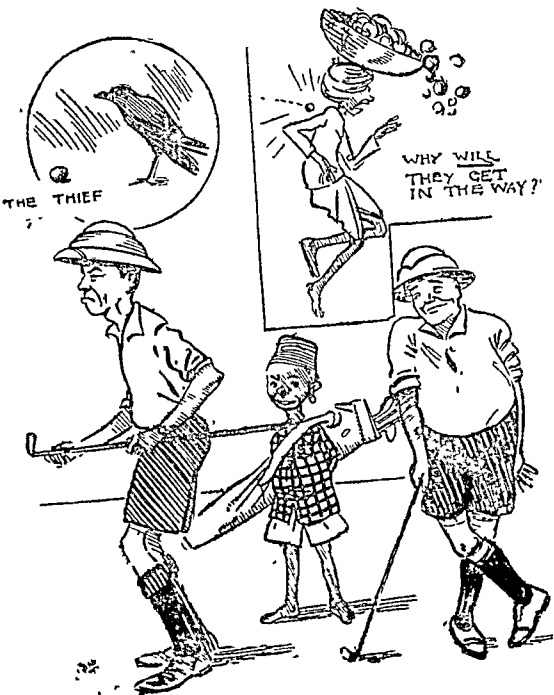
Where there is a deficiency of natural bunkers, low canvas screens are erected, but it should be explained that it is not considered etiquette to trickle your ball underneath them if bunkered, when your opponent is not looking.

The leanness of the golfer is amazing. He will go to bed at 3 a.m., after a bridge party, and rise with the lark—or bulbul, or whatever the Eastern equivalent is—and be quite on top of his form. He doesn't get tired until afterwards, but then he is in the office, so it does not matter. Morning after morning you will see him (if you are up early enough) tramping round the palm-girt maidans smiting away at the little white ball for dear life, sometimes ruefully surveying a decapitated driver, or impotently shaking his fist at a crow that has swooped down and retired with his new "Colonel" to the fastnesses of a neighbouring banyan tree. Crows have a special liking for golf balls, and it is no uncommon occurrence for them to pounce on them and fly away with them.

As a rule there is "something on" the game, generally a golf ball, or a breakfast, and you can always tell the loser by the noise he makes when an unscrupulous opponent makes him sign for drinks, in addition.

It was in India that a hoary golfing joke originated. A player had sliced out a nice divot, and remembering the club rules his opponent reminded him that he was required to "replace the turf."

It was in the hot weather, before the monsoon, and gazing quizzically at the sunbaked tawny earth, the other replied "Replace the turf? Return the place, you mean?"



THE GHARRI.

THE ramshackle affair on wheels in which you ride in state in Bombay is called a gharrī but this is letting it off lightly, as it really deserves to be called much worse names than that. Curiously enough, the European calls it by the Hindustani word, while the native servant prefers to use the English term, and is quite proud of his linguistic efforts when he hails a "Vict orri ah!"

The Bombay gharrī is not really the oldest thing in the Presidency, but it must be somewhere near it judging from its dilapidated upholsterings and ancient pattern. It is hard to retain one's dignity when seated in a thing at which a respectable dustbin would turn up its nose, but what is one to do? The climate makes walking an infliction, and we are not all of us sufficiently in debt to be able to indulge in a motor car. The only alternative is a tram ride. Help!

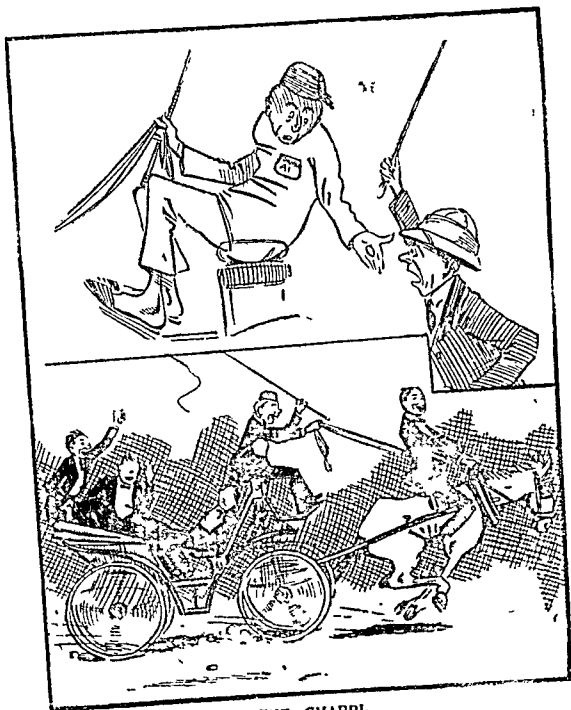
The gharrī wallah abounds in Bombay, for he is the jehu of the East. He is the cultured gentleman who ornaments the box of the spic and span vehicles that ply for hire in the streets, and you may know him by his khaki overall and red fez. He greets you with a cringing smile when you step into his gharrī, and parts from you with a scowl. He invariably fleeces the inexperienced European who first lands in India. If he is paid eight annas for a four annas fare he knows his passenger is green, and demands a rupee accordingly. The balance of things comes later, when the new-comer has gained a little knowledge. Four annas take him quite considerable distances then!

It is rumoured that a hardened European died from shock because a gharrī wallah said "salaam" when he received the legitimate fare.

Beyond a broken winded knock kneed pony in his dotage, and an ancient victoria, the gharrī wallah needs little. The essentials are that he shall not know the rules of the road, that he shall never be able to drive or know the way to any spot in the town, and that he shall be able to go to sleep on the box while his pony indulges in a shambling trot-cum walk.

The gharrī wallah loves the British Tommy dearly, and that is why he invariably whips up and disappears from sight whenever he sees a khaki uniform in the offing.

Sometimes the young sahib becomes his own gharrī wallah, and takes the reins himself, as we see in the sketch. But this is only on special occasions, when he is going to a burra khalana, or is attending a reception to one of his colleagues who is going Home by the next mail steamer. The real gharrī wallah on such occasions gets a little sprinting exercise, which is good for his constitution.



THE GHARRI.

THE SHIKARI,

THE Shikari is the hunter of the East, at least, that is what he calls himself, but the native cultivators through whose crops he stalks call him something much stronger

Sometimes he sets out to bag tiger, and returns with a field mouse and a beater, but occasionally he has luck, and comes across quite desirable quarry when he least expects to do so (as we see in the picture) The more enthusiastic Shikari will sit up all night in a tree on the look out for a leopard which two weeks previously was reputed to have made a meal off a wandering calf Usually the hunter misses the leopard and catches a cold

Shikaris are only human, and occasionally they make mistakes Sometimes, like Tartarin of Tarascon, they shoot donkeys in mistake for lions (or even black buck—but that is another story!)—while one ardent sportsman we know of even went the length of stalking an inoffensive domestic buffalo, and shooting it through the hind quarters, believing it to be a rare type of bison

Some people become famous as big game hunters without really deserving it As, for instance, the young man who unsuccessfully tried his luck shooting in India, and later went to New Zealand Happening on a frozen meat store, he directed that a carcase should be sent to his parents in England, knowing the scarcity of prime mutton there "Ah," observed the family, on opening the package, "Adolphus has shot a lion, but he has forgotten to send the skin" So they bought one for him, and had it stuffed, and now Adolphus is regarded as belonging to the first flight of big game hunters

Once a man was playing with a new gun, and he accidentally shot a bullock So he said, "Blow", and felt in his pocket for some compensation money But the bullock was trespassing on Government land, and the native owner was afraid to claim it, fearing he would be punished for the act of trespass So he sat him down and wept

Then the Collector sahib came along, and asked, "Do you weep for your bullock that is killed?"

"No, no, huzoor," replied the frightened man, "the bullock is not mine"

'Then why do you weep?' said the big man

"Oh, burra-sahib, I weep because, because a poor bullock that is not mine has been killed," said the native

And so, since none claimed the bullock, it was given to the man who shot it, and he was able to give the biggest dinner in the station that year And the native was beaten for weeping without cause, which all goes to show that the righteous shall always be rewarded, and the wicked punished.



THE SHIKARI.

AN EVERYDAY TRAGEDY.

“**S**ALAAM, Master,” said Thomas, peering into my room. I call my boy Thomas because it has a homely sound and reminds me of England. He is immensely pleased with it, and personally I think it a great improvement on his real name, which I can never remember. “Well,” I said to Thomas, “show the gentleman in. I did not catch his name, but I daresay that does not matter much.”

A silent individual sidled in the room smiling bashfully. His suit could not have been very expensive, neither was it of Bond Street cut. In fact, it only consisted of a cloth and a small shirt. He carried a mysterious bundle on his head. Thomas undid the bundle, while the visitor closed his eyes, and squatting on his haunches seemed to go to sleep.

My boy pulled forth a light, coffee-coloured rag and held it up for my inspection. My hopes of a Christmas-box were immediately dashed to the ground.

I eyed the rag disinterestedly and made no remark. Thomas meanwhile proceeded to dissect the interior of the strange parcel. He pulled forth more and more rags, some large, some small, all having a brownish complexion, and all picturesquely frayed.

I had been in India just a week, be it known, and I realised that of Indian ways and customs I knew nothing. This may have been some sort of religious ceremony that Thomas and the silent visitor were performing for my benefit. There was an expectant look on my boy's face, however, when he had fished the odds and ends out of the parcel and he seemed to be waiting for me to say something. I was evidently expected to make a speech expressing my thanks for their kind and thoughtful attentions. I did so, and the silent visitor rose to his feet, salaamed, and faded out of the door.

Thomas picked up the frayed and tattered rags, and much to my astonishment, commenced to place them—according to some sort of system of his own—in my chest-of-drawers. I pride myself upon the quality and appearance of my linen, and therefore I did not fancy my stock being contaminated with the stained rags that had figured in the little function.

“Thomas,” I appealed, “what on earth are you doing?”

He turned to me with an expressionless countenance, and observed “Dhobi, master!”

Then a terrible truth dawned upon me. I sprang from the bed and rushed to the frayed and torn rags. I swayed dizzily as I grasped the enormity of the crime that had been perpetrated, and dropped, panting and pale of face into a chair.

My washing had come home!



RANDOM SKETCHES.

THE DHOBÍ.

THE dhobi is the human scarifier of wearing apparel, and he is in league with the tailor. He does your washing, but he "does" it so conscientiously that you never recognise it on its return. One treatment at the hands of the dhobi and your silk suits are admirably suited for dusters.

The dhobi takes a pride in his work, and it is his boast that he can, in one washing, entirely delete the most "indelible" coloured stripes from a fancy shirt, and put a hacksaw edge to the most stubborn of stiff linen collars.

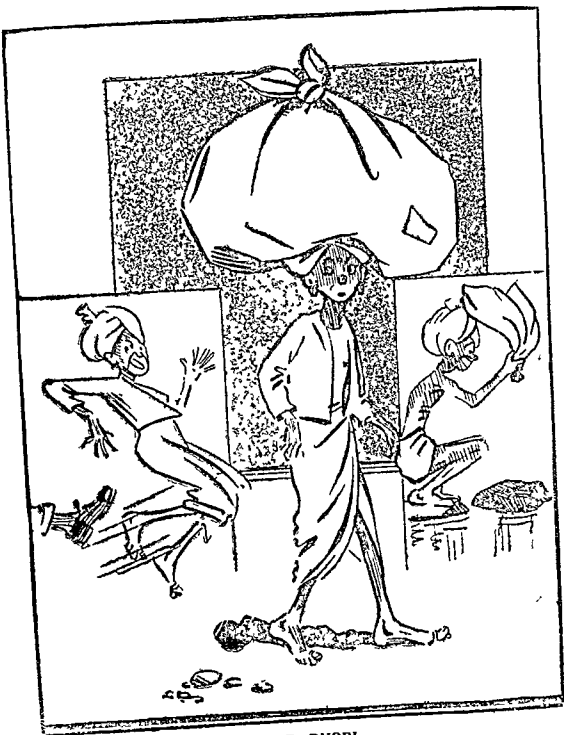
He puts the clothes in a thick mixture of water and germs, and then beats them on stones till they are reduced to a pulp. He has a special stone with which he breaks all the buttons.

If there is an ink-stain on your trousers which defies his treatment, he will use his knife and cut out the offending spot.

If he is late in returning your best things it is because he has honoured them with his approval, and either wears them for a day or two himself, or loans them for small considerations to friends in need.

He is easy-going himself and cannot understand why you should put yourself out when he produces only two pairs of socks out of the half dozen that he received. He is a bit of a conjuror in his way and can transform a neat pair of white flannel trousers into drab felt in the twinkling of an eye.

He evidently flourished in Shakespeare's time, for the Bard of Avon (copyright phrase) wrote of him, "Dhobi or not dhobi—."



THE DHOBI.

THE MONSOON.

IN the words of Mr. Mantalni, Bombay during the monsoon is "demned moist and unpleasant"

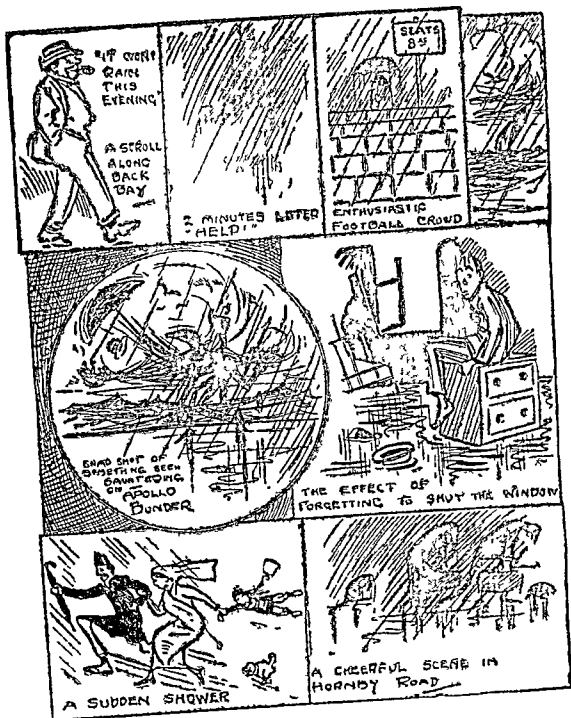
The walls assume bilious spots and patches, and the plaster flakes off in your early morning tea. Clothes which you thought good for another season produce rich crops of green mould, and it is no uncommon thing to find grass sprouting in boots which have been put away for a week or so.

When your boy uses the sigree he generally manages to burn nice large holes in the seat of your nether garments, which is reprehensible conduct, since draughts at this time of year are things to be shunned. It is touching to see the numbers of cockroaches that take up their winter quarters in the warm folds of your dress clothes. Common humanity forbids you to say them nay, since only a man with a heart of flint could turn them out to spend the night on a cold stone floor.

The monsoon controller is quite a humorist in his damp way, and delights in playing off practical jokes. Suppose, for instance, that you go to bed, leaving the window open a trifle, because the night looks so fine. Then the monsoon joker will chuckle with glee and send down sheets of water, which deluge your room, and set the furniture afloat. You always sleep more soundly than usual on such occasions, and generally wake up to find the bed afloat, and your boy swimming to you with the chota hazri tray on his head.

Cricket and football and other forms of mud sports are indulged in during the rainy season, but the most popular pastimes are 'What's Yours?' and "Have another."

The most amusing products of monsoon growth are the weather prophets. They come along in shoals in May, and fill columns of the papers with their epics. Editors like them, because their effusions fill up space, thus saving wear and tear to the office scissors and paste. The Arch joker of the Prophets lives at Simla, and tells us what the weather was the day before yesterday, for which we are deeply grateful, since we might have forgotten. His biggest joke is his monsoon forecast, which tells us that there may be a heavy monsoon, or there may be a light one, while it is also possible that there may be an average one, so that whatever happens he can always say, "I told you so."



THE MONSOON

A CHUMMERY BURRA-KHANA.

A CHUMMERY burra khana, so well known in Bombay, is a gathering of a dozen or more sedate young men to commemorate some auspicious occasion, such as the departure on leave, of one of their "clique." Occasionally the function is held to mark some especially sad and painful happening, even so lamentable a misfortune as the impending marriage of a member of the Chummery.

Pure and wholesome lemonade or khali sodas are not much in favour on such occasions, but chota pegs are dispensed liberally during the courses at dinner, and conversation flows easily, though hardly on such subjects as Art, Drama and Literature. Here is a specimen.

By Jove, you are a lucky blighter! Fancy being able to roll into the Pav in three weeks' time. No more sweating in the sticky East for eight months! Lord, an' I've got another two years rigorous to do. Came out in January, 1911."

Then the youngster, who has been out just six months, breaks in musingly with 'Fancy being able to swill a jolly old bitter again! 'Wonder if London has changed much! Don't believe I should be able to find my way about up West now."

'Shut up," says the Four Year Man, "You're only a chokra. As if they allowed you out in Piccadilly or Regent street without your nurse. Rotten shot"—ducking his head neatly, and allowing a plantain to sail harmlessly by, to fetch up with a thwack on the bearded butler's white cummerbund.

'Aha," says the man who has booked his passage 'I shall think of you beggars squabbling and grouching during the monsoon when I get to Paris. Think of the music halls and the cafes, and the boulevards, *and* the girls! And just imagine me crossing the choppy old Channel and spotting Dover's white cliffs again, and then rolling into dear smoky old London, with all the roar, and noise and bustle, with whole companies of one's people waiting to greet one at Charing Cross Station!"

Then up rises the company as one man, and literally sits upon the speaker. "You are getting sentimental" pronounces the Bank man severely. 'Butler, don't let him have any more lemonades." Sentiment and the finer emotions must be sternly suppressed at all costs.

The assembled company then sings 'For he is a jolly good fellow" half a-dozen times, with more power than skill to the rapturous delight of the neighbours who have been vainly endeavouring to get to sleep for the past hour.

The guests disperse the burra khana is over.



A BURRA-KHANA.

HOUSEMAIDS.

THE hamal is a kind of maid-of-all-work ; at least, he would be if he was not of the male persuasion. He is the meek gentleman who is never seen in anything but a little black pill-box hat, a more or less white coat, and a dhoti. You can hear him early in the morning flicking the dust off the dining-room furniture with an ancient duster. That it may settle again in the same spot does not trouble him.

His work is more superficial than thorough, and he much prefers to secrete the overnight sweepings of the floor under the table or the side-board to going to the trouble of collecting the refuse in a dust-pan, but if his master's eye is upon him he may collect the dust into the pan and with the air of an injured martyr he will carry it from the room. Were one to follow, however, it would be to see him deftly flick the contents of the dust-pan over the verandah on to the washing that is ornamenting the compound below.

His aim in life is to do everything in the wrong way. He leaves the knives in boiling water to discolour the handles, and grinds away at the back of the blade until the back is sharper than the edge, and this accomplished, he sets about giving the blade that delicate wasp-waist that is so pleasing when one tries to dissect tough meat.

He is at the beck and call of everyone in the house, and the "boys" make him do all their hard work. If a box or a bicycle has to be moved, or the sahib wants a gharri, the boy takes the order and passes it on in a dictatorial manner to the hamal.

The parlour-maid and the maid-of-all-work in India is hardly so pert and neat as his counterpart at Home !



HOUSEMAIDS.
(English and Indian).

THE SHOE-MAKER.

IN any shady by street you may see the shoe-maker at work. His stock-in-trade consists of a bundle of odds and ends of leather, half-a dozen well-worn and primitive tools, and a needle and thread. Armed with these implements he can achieve astounding results. Like all the lower class natives he dislikes machinery, and prefers to work with instruments that were probably considered by Europeans to be antiquated at the time when Shah Jehan built the Taj.

The shoe maker, or moochi, has a sliding scale of charges. The sahib who loans him a pair of West End shoes as a model, naturally has to pay the most, while the native policeman pays the least, in fact, he does not pay at all. It is useful to have a friend in the police court sometimes.

The great failing of the native shoe maker so far as the European is concerned is the fact that he can never make the shoes fit round the ankles. He will come to your bungalow, and take the measurements of your pedal extremity by placing it on a piece of paper and tracing round it with a pencil. He will assure you that there never was such a boot maker as he, and that your previous unfortunate experiences were due to the fact that you neglected to employ him. You lend him a pair of nicely fitting shoes to copy, and after a few days he returns with the product of his labour. Superficially he has copied the model perfectly. The little holes and ornamentations are punched and copied to a nicety, the soles are beautifully glazed, the laces are irreproachable, and he has copied the pattern faithfully in every detail, even down to the faulty piece of leather at the instep. But when you try on the shoes, you find that they yawn miserably at the ankle. He cannot fit you round there. It is his *Pons Asinorum*, and he can never get over it.

The moochi is more interesting when you watch him at work on the footpath. He squats down on the ground with his poor little stock in trade spread picturesquely around him, and works away industriously, oblivious of the passing traffic or the pedestrians who brush past him. He holds the shoe between his feet, which make an admirable natural vice for him. He works on the principle of "Shoes mended while you wait." The customer removes his foot gear, squats down alongside, and puffs biddees while the shoe-maker sews and hammers, and rapidly brings order where previously were gaping holes and untidy rents. No shoe is too old or too far gone for him to mend, and frequently the original shoe disappears entirely, to be replaced by patches and mendings, so that an economic household can make one pair of shoes last for several generations.

The itinerant shoe-maker is a good fellow and a hard worker, and though he gets a scanty return for his labour, he has the satisfaction of knowing that so long as he can patch a shoe there will always be work for him.



THE SHOE-MAKER,

THE NATIVE POLICEMAN.

“If you want to know the time, ask a policeman,” may be very sound advice in London, but in India the remark loses its point.

Suppose, for instance, you are in Bombay, and you wish to know the whereabouts of a certain building. You approach one of those picturesque gentlemen in blue tunics and bloomers who ornament the street corners.

You summon up your best “Hindustani taught in a month” vernacular, and enquire “The Taj Mahal Hotel where is?” (This is a literal translation)

He of the hairy brown shins and guileless countenance gazes stolidly through you into the brick wall opposite, and makes a noise in his throat.

Your question is repeated. This time he looks at you, hastily shifts his gaze, as if the sight were anything but pleasant, and scratches his shaven pate. He gives a more rakish tilt to his yellow cap, which in shape resembles a large penny bun, and gripping his umbrella as if it were a rifle at the “carry,” he saunters off to watch a pariah fight.

Feeling somewhat piqued, you follow, and put your query with more insistence. Having driven him into a corner, he replies in a bashful and not very chatty way that he has not the least idea. So you fasten on the first chokra who comes along, who points out a huge building, against the main gate of which the policeman had originally been standing.

Therefore, to ask a native policeman the time would merely be a waste of breath since he cannot even tell you where the Taj is when he is leaning against it.

The native policeman has very few attributes in common with his English counterpart. He can hardly be described as an artist in regulating traffic. If he sees two motor cars approaching each other he will signal both to proceed, so that if they followed his directions a nice little head to head collision would result. May be, however, he is bored, and wishes to create a little innocent diversion.

One of the qualifications, apparently, to becoming a native policeman, is to possess, abnormally thin shanks and large feet (the latter being his one point of resemblance to the English “copper”).

Nothing upsets the police-wallah more than to have his nap disturbed, and, indeed, it needs a pretty large earthquake to do it. Even a brawny Pathan money lender, applying a little gentle persuasion to a defaulting debtor, (as we are shown on the opposite page), fails to rob the “copper” of his well earned rest. It is a moot point amongst those who make a study of such things whether “the copper” really is unaware of the crime committed behind his back, or whether his bump of caution is over-developed. We can hardly blame him for preferring a quiet day and a whole body to an exciting time and a broken head.

His motto to the badmashis who frequent his “beat” probably is “If you can’t be good, be careful.”



THE NATIVE POLICEMAN.

THE NATIVE BAZAAR.

IF the visitor could but lose the use of his olfactory nerves for a time he would find a visit to the native quarter and the bazaars highly interesting. The houses for the most part are high and jumbled close together, while the roads have no pavements for the obvious reason that there would be no room left for a road if they had. They are thronged with a miscellaneous collection of be-turbaned inhabitants, who group themselves picturesquely in the narrowest thoroughfares and bargain or gossip in shrill voices, bedaubing the streets, walls, and occasionally the passers by, with streams of crimson liquid from their *pan supari*.

There are plenty of garish colours to offend the eye, just as there are innumerable and varied odours to do ditto to the nose. There is one peculiarly obnoxious aroma, which emanates, I believe, from burning ghee, and is so thick that it seems to adhere to the back of the throat and takes hours to get rid of. Plenty of other odours from the drains, vegetable refuse, and what not, assail the luckless visitor at every step, sometimes cunningly commingled with the sickly reek of patchouli and cocoanut oil, as some native "nut" swaggers past, clad in a quiet holiday costume. His idea of quietness is a vivid green waistcoat, rainbow coat, and pink turban.

Bombay has been labelled "the city of a thousand smells" and the visitor endorses this description, though the old resident becomes hardened.

The shops are like caverns scooped out of some solid piece, with collections of goods thrown higgledy piggledy into them. Here is a medley of cheap German toys and tin goods, there a profusion of coloured muslins and inferior silks, while opposite is a grain merchant's emporium, filled up with mounds of rice, dhali, beans, and dried peas. In each shop the proprietor sits cross-legged enthroned on a pile of his goods, while little native children, innocent of clothing, with stomachs blown out with rice, and unkempt heads of black hair, play hide and seek in the dim and musty interiors of the shops. Hens strut about the street, or hop up on to the piles of food, and feed, unchecked, black and white goats, wearing an air of proprietorship, nose about amongst the goods, and hump-backed cows meander, apparently untended, along the congested streets, wherever their fancy directs them. Crowds of Hindus or Mahomedans squat in groups in the shadow of the bazaars. It is all very picturesque and "oriental," and—whew! here comes that aroma again!

A drive through the native quarter at night, especially in the hot weather, makes the visitor shudder, since he imagines he is driving through a city of the dead. The metallic light of the full moon throws jet-black shadows and stretched out in its cold radiance are scores upon scores of motionless figures, wrapped from head to foot in funeral vestment. They litter the road wherever the eye can penetrate, and are in imminent risk of decapitation from an occasional passing vehicle. A lean, vermin-infested pariah dog slinks across the road, and one of the "corpses" sits bolt upright, glances sleepily around, and re-covering his head with his sheet, resumes his sleep, with nothing but the hard road for pillow and mattress.

The poorer people prefer to sleep in the road, and having seen their domiciles, who can blame them?



THE NATIVE BAZAAR.

THE MILKMAID.

THE pastoral idea of a rosy-cheeked buxom lass in dainty muslin, carrying a frothing pail of creamy milk, is hardly applicable to the East. The milkmaid of India is not renowned for her beauty, or her sense of humour, and she lacks that power of repartee which the "pretty maid" of the nursery rhyme apparently possessed.

If, topee in hand, you salaamed and observed to her "Tum kiddar jata mera khubsurat chokri?"* she would probably reply with no little acerbity: "Tumku kea kar ne ka hai?"†

On the other hand, supposing she had told you, like her pert English counterpart, that she was going a-milking, and that her face was her fortune, you would hardly need to look twice to realise that if her financial status depended on her good looks she would be doomed to continual poverty.

The milkmaid generally travels with her brass pots of milk balanced on her head, and is accompanied by a lumbering slate-grey buffalo-cow, which is chiefly remarkable for its extreme ugliness, and its total lack of hirsute growth. The reason why the lady takes the milk-producer about with her is obvious. When she arrives at the bungalow which obtains its daily supplies from her, she drives the cow up the garden-path to the servants' quarters. Then she takes down a brass pot from her head, removes the handful of not over-clean straw which she has stuffed in the mouth to prevent the liquid spilling, and pours out the amount of milk required. The liquid in question is a languid bluish white, and could never be accused of harbouring the constituents of cream in its watery bosom.

The butler may eye the milk with suspicion, but there is the cow before his very eyes, and so there is nothing to be said. Nevertheless, it is annoying for the butler, because if the milk is too thin he has to go short himself. He deducts what he needs for his own consumption, and fills up the jug from the tap.

There is one rather nice trait in the character of the Indian milkmaid. She has a great and abiding love for the bhistiewallah. It is, however, purely a platonic love, and is not unconnected with business. There is, of course, a milkmaid's song and dance and the burden of the refrain is:—

Every little drop,
Added to what you've got,
Makes just a little drop more!

* Where are you going to, my pretty maid?

† What's that got to do with you?



THE MILKMAID.

THE COCKROACH.

THE cockroach must find the world a very hard place. He is always holding out the glad hand of friendship to all and sundry, and yet he is always repulsed. Directly he comes from under the side board with the object of having a friendly chat with you, he is "shoo d" out of the room, or meets a horrid death under the grinding heel of man. Even the dictionary speaks slightly of him, describing him as "the common black beetle." That is why the cockroach always wears a reproachful, resigned air. His life is a tragedy, he is one of the poor inhabitants of this earth who is bound to be misunderstood.

Despite the load of sorrow which he has to bear it must be confessed that the cockroach thrives well on it. In fact, he simply swarms on it. He is to be found everywhere in Bombay. He is like a newspaper reporter, always nosing around where he is not wanted.

He is on it like a bird if there is any food going. I remember once taking two charming young ladies to Elephanta in a steam launch, and everything went well until we unpacked the eatables and commenced feeding. The first intimation I had of what was impending was the sight of a cockroach emerging from the interior of a chicken. Just then one of the ladies uttered an ear piercing shriek, and dropping her plate on the butler's toes, she lifted her dainty feet in the air, much to my embarrassment. She shook a remarkably neat pair of glass-kid shoes and lavender silk stockings wildly in the air, and the cause of the trouble fell on the deck with a thud.

The other young lady was seized with similar spasms, and nearly went into hysterics. I felt inclined to laugh, and was about to cheer up the maidens in my usual breezy style, when I felt something cold and clammy investigating my spinal cord, while something else made a rapid ascent up my trouser leg. I said something for which I have not been forgiven even now, and I could hardly raise a smile when, in my efforts to dislodge the intruders, I cannoned into a belaying pin or a marling spike, or some other piece of nautical furniture. The collision took place in the small of my back, and the explorer suddenly grew still, and I had a curious sensation when I realised that the blow had squashed—er, had killed him.

The young ladies sat on their seats à la Hindu cooche, afraid to put their shapely feet to the ground, uttering little squeaks of terror now and then. All the cockroaches in Christendom seemed to have come uninvited to our picnic and it was fortunate we had brought plenty of food. It was quite a sight to see the multitude of them pushing, snarling, and fighting over the tiffin basket. The Serang had seen how the land lay, and turning the vessel round, had raced home for life. We reached Ballard Pier in the nick of time, just as the army of starving beetles devoured the last loaf and the last pound of ham. Had the food given out, I tremble to think what would have happened. The ravenous beasts would have set upon us, I am positive.

Although I had previously been most friendly with the two fascinating young ladies, they refused to know me any more, and always gave me the cold storage stare whenever I saw them again.

But perhaps my most amusing experience with the playful cockroach was an incident that happened during one breakfast time recently. I took a gulp of coffee, it was good. I took another, and threw my head back to have a really good go at it, when a long thin spider-like thing tickled my lip. I looked closer, and found the corpse of a large and well-developed cockroach reposing in the grounds. Imagine my feelings, I can hardly stop laughing now, when I think of it. Ugh!

I have decided that the cockroach is too insistent and impervious to a hint to make a really good pal.



THE COCKROACH.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE NAUTCH.

If you go to a nautch with the idea of being pleasantly shocked you will be disappointed. I was! The adjective "naughty" is frequently used with "nautch" but even an American mission lady would find nothing at which to raise her eyebrows.

They really ought to send out a Royal Commission to investigate matters of this sort, and ascertain why Indian institutions are so labelled. As, for instance, why the nautch is considered naughty, or why hill stations have the reputation of being "fast." Probably if you go to the latter you will find them dull, and then kick yourself for having come.

One of the first nautches I saw was at the wedding festivities of a Maharajah's son, and a neighbouring potentate's nautch girls gave the performance. They were plump little things with fascinating smiles, and had I not feared the Maharajah's wrath I might have been tempted to make love to them. The girls had their black hair parted in the middle and drawn back tightly over the ears. Gold ornaments hung from their ears, and crescent shaped pieces of jewellery pierced their noses. Their heavy gold bracelets and anklets clashed musically as they danced.

Not being much of an expert in ladies' wearing apparel I cannot give the technical names of their garments. I know, however, that they wore baggy trousers, gauzy kind of skirts and little shimmering chemise things. There were some more gauzy things, all glittering with sequins and silver thread, and plain broad belts of gold clasped their shapely waists.

The music was supplied by a fiddler, a tom tom player, and a gentleman who manipulated a kind of primitive bag pipe.

We were seated in large marquee, which was lined with rose coloured silk, and was thickly carpeted. In the front row was a fat, jolly, military man, with a shiny bald head, and a fierce white moustache. His wife, a well preserved severe matron, sat next to him.

The show commenced with a few scrapes on the fiddle, a squeak from the bag pipe and a bang or two on the tom tom. One of the girls advanced into the centre of the circle with lithe sinuous movements, and commenced her song. I find the Bombay bat bad enough, but do not know a jot of Tamil, so that the words, sung in a plaintive monotonous key, were all double-Dutch to me.

It was evidently a love song, however, with various little lovers' quarrels introduced and the singer, with her expressive face and alluring smile, certainly knew how to simulate loving tenderness and passion.

When she was full of melting sweetness she always gazed with soulful eyes at the Major, and had it not been for his wife, who looked scandalised and indignant, I am convinced he would have returned her gestures.

The little singer, in expressing other emotions invariably faced the Major's wife regarding her under her eye-lashes with amused scorn, ending up by tilting her nose contemptuously in the air, and turning her back on her. Of course, it was all part of the song, but I really think the nautch girl had considerable perception and humour.

Indian music is strange to the Western ear, and if you listen to English children imitating a band in the nursery you can get some idea of it. The singing is nasal and very much of a muchness. The song in question was seemingly never ending and had lasted about an hour when the Master of the Ceremonies put an end to it by holding up his hand and demanding a dance.

This was something after the style of a Maud Allan dance—with clothing. The dancers made much play with their hands, extending their arms and bending the extremities at right angles to the fore arms. Again, as in the song, they seemed to be expressing emotions sometimes of love, sometimes of defiance, as they prouetted and swayed to the rapid beating of the tom tom and the scraping in a minor key on the fiddle.

It was highly interesting but it was far from being naughty. But then, perhaps people like the Major's wife are responsible for the misleading term "naughty nautch."



A NAUTCH.

THE SWEET MAKER.

THE native sweet-meat maker can hardly be called the Fuller of the East. Expensive bon-bons and opera caramels are unknown to him, and yet he does a most extensive trade. He goes in for quantity rather than quality, and a few pice will buy more than enough to satisfy the most voracious appetite.

He makes his sweets in the open, which is possibly a factor in his favour. What the ingredients are Heaven only knows. His speciality is a species of barley-sugar. Having compounded a horrible-looking mixture, he strips himself to the waist, wipes the honest sweat from his brow, and sets to work, to worry, and knead, and pummel that lump of sticky stuff until it consents to hang together like dough. If it is unusually recalcitrant he will jump up and down on it, and knead it that way. He usually performs this operation in the street, to the admiration of the chokras. Having worried the mixture into a dough-like consistency, he seizes it in both hands, and hurls it against the wall. He is not a very good catch, and occasionally it falls into the gutter, but who is the wiser? Then he hangs it on to a nail in the wall, and has a rare old game of tug-of-war with it. If it has been well kneaded, it clings to the nail like a brother, and the confectioner pulls at it until it stretches like elastic. The more knocking about it receives, the harder it becomes.

When it meets with his approval, he cuts it into thin strips, which he twists to give the spiral effect, and then lays aside to harden. The ubiquitous fly finds the sweet most nutritious, while even the ownerless pariah is not above having a surreptitious lick as he slinks past.

Our delectable barley-sugar is now ready for the market, and we may see the itinerant sweet-meat vendor hawking it about in the town. Ayahs buy it to give to their young charges to keep them quiet, but it is probable that the Memsahibs would have several different kinds of fits if they knew. The fact that it acts as a most efficient fly-paper does not affect the children's appetite in the least.



SWEET-MEAT MAKERS.

SPRING CLEANING.

MAN was wicked, so spring cleaning was invented to punish him. In India we do our "spring" cleaning in the autumn, but the effect is the same as in England. For two night mare weeks we live in an atmosphere of paint, bare floors, scrambled meals, dust and white wash, and at the end of it all the flat seems a bit more dilapidated than before.

Wall paper is unknown in Bombay, because the damp from the monsoon would peel it off, so distemper takes its place. At the end of each monsoon the distempered wall is so saturated with the damp that it is coloured with as many indefinite blues and greens as a Corot master piece. So we get into touch with the landlord, and after much haggling he consents to have little painting and spring cleaning done.

For a fortnight we know what real discomfort is. Coolies, of both sexes, take possession of the flat, and chivy us first from the verandah to the dining room, then from the dining-room to the bed room, then from the bedroom to the bath room, where we are forced to take up our abode for a week. There is a music hall sketch to be seen at Home entitled, I think "Wal Pink's Workmen," in which the concluding scene shows us a whirl of broken ladders, punctured waterpipes, crumbling walls, upset paint pots, and excited workmen. The author of that sketch must have obtained his inspiration from Bombay.

Because the Indian coolie makes a stupendous mess and muddle, and any amount of noise, it does not at all follow that he is doing any work. Suppose, for instance, that he is going to distemper our bedroom walls. He starts off by upsetting a pot of white wash on the bed and then gets a pick and digs a huge hole in the cement floor. Next he chips as much plaster as he can off the corners of the walls, and follows by making a breach in the wall itself. That done, he rigs up all sorts of scaffolding, swings, and ladders, and at last feels thoroughly at home, so much so, in fact, that at the end of a week we have to remind him that we pay the rent so that we may live in the flat ourselves, and do not reckon on providing a permanent home for him and his relations.

The coolie is a great believer in the maxim that unity is strength. When he has a couple of bricks to take up to the top floor of a building he will not place them on his head and carry them up himself. He must perforce rig up a derrick, and attach the bricks to a rope. Then he collects twenty or thirty pals and they all tail on to the loose end of the rope. They start off with a *rousing chorus*, and at the end of the fifteenth line they give a solitary "heave," which lifts the load a couple of inches. The chorus is repeated and at the end, up go the bricks another two inches. If the building is a hundred feet high it takes several days to get the load to the top.

If we wish our room to be distempered a neat grey, he will start off by slapping on a bilious green. Having discovered that we did not want the walls knocked down or the floor taken up, he fills up the cavities with rubble, and gives a lick of paint to the surface, satisfied that he has done all that is required of him. Then he gradually removes the scaffolding, and ladders, and paint pots and finally himself, and our boy tidies up. Somehow we are not quite satisfied. The holes in the walls show up so, the paint stains on the floor appear to be indelible, two or three shutters have been knocked off their hinges, the furniture is scratched and spattered with plaster, while the bilious green distemper offends our eye.

Frequently we hear of buildings collapsing in Bombay, and the contractors are blamed. This is unfair, the probability is that spring cleaners have been at work.



SPRING-CLEANING!

RACING.

EVERYBODY races in India. That is one of the reasons why we are so poor. Now the book maker has been barred in Bombay, the public presumably are bound to win on the Tote, getting back all the money invested bar the ten per cent appropriated by the Turf Club. The curious part is that nobody seems to win. Undeterred by previous unhappy experiences the European blithely turns up at all the meetings. Goodness knows how he manages to scamp his work in order to do it, but there he is, a fat wad of notes in his pocket, binoculars over his shoulder, and a "dead cert" for every race.

It was easier for him when the bookies were here, because their prices gave him an inkling of the form of the various starters. Now the public is left to its own devices and has to make its own favourites, frequently with disastrous results. At the end of the meetings everybody complains of a bad season. Then who does get all the money? The answer to the riddle surely cannot be that the punter fears that if he acknowledged he was "up," all his impecunious friends would come round and help him spend his winnings. The real answer probably is that only those "in the know" can win consistently now, while the majority of race goers, the outsiders, must be content to pay the piper.

The amusing part about the Tote is that if the favourite does happen to win, it generally pays out about Rs 98, so that although you have won you get back less than your stake.

Take any race you like and watch the play of emotions on the countenances of the multitude. As the horses romp round the bend and thunder along the straight to the winning-post, it is ten to one that the public's choice is an ignoble last. The faces of the Europeans are pictures of dismay and mortification, but those thick lipped gentlemen who wear fezzes and frequent stables, smile in beatific contentment. Then the Arab horse-dealers, those knowing birds who wear dusters, surmounted with chaplets of things that look like sausages on their heads, may be seen to close one eye several times, while the ghost of a grin hovers round their bearded faces. As a rule they are about as emotional as a bit of Porebunder stone, but occasionally they allow their features to relax a trifle.

Ladies go to the races for the same reason that most of them go to Church, and you really do see some very charming toilettes. Some of them follow the trend of things very keenly, and they one and all take a cashier with them in the shape of their latest male admirer. This is rather a paying game for the wily Eve. She enters the grand stand with a capacious hand bag containing exactly six annas. She leaves with anything from twenty to a few hundred chips. Her method of fleecing the gilded youth is to ask him in dulcet tones to put twenty each way on So-and so for her, naturally omitting to hand him the cash. If the horse wins she claims her winnings with exultant cries of joy, if it fails to get placed she conveniently forgets all about it.

The safest way of backing is to listen carefully to all those friends of yours who pull you into a corner and with much secrecy impart the "sure thing" to you, and then to put your money on the remaining horses. On the principle, however, that a ten-dib note saved is a ten-dib note earned, the surest way of making money at racing is to take Mr. Punch's advice to those about to marry.



Roy S.

THE "SURE THING" LOSES

AN EVENING REST.

AFTER a hard day at the office there is nothing so enjoyable as a rest in a long chair on the verandah, in the cool of the evening. A chota peg at your elbow, a fragrant cheroot between your lips, and your cup of happiness is full. That is the ideal, but invariably two factors obtrude themselves sufficiently to disturb the serenity of your mind to rather an unpleasant degree.

Let us suppose your work has been rather trying and the weather has been in one of its nasty moods—insufferably close and sticky. Despite the unkind fiction current at Home you probably have out here considerably more work than play, and consequently, when at last you do land back at your bungalow, you feel you have justly earned an hour's rest. Perhaps you don a kamona or even a bathgown, and a comfortable pair of slippers, and with a sense of delightful tiredness you sink into the long chair on the terrace, cock your feet on the arms and feel at peace with all things. The sun that made itself so unpleasantly felt during the day, is sinking behind the sea line in a rich bed of soft pink and gold, the tall palm trees nod their feathery heads with a soothing rustle as the warm breeze stirs them, the dreamy strains of a waltz are wafted from a neighbouring club. Your mind is lulled and comforted and you regret the harsh things you said to your native clerks in the afternoon, you muse dreamily of what you will do when you get your leave, you recall pleasant incidents that occurred at Home.

Suddenly your reverie is rudely broken by a shrill buzz in your ear, like a distant trumpet. The mosquitoes have found you out! They hurry from all parts to enjoy their evening repast. An intolerable itching on your ankle is entirely unrelieved by frenzied scratching. A lump rapidly rises on your knuckle, there are several on your neck.

Then, as you vainly try to "shoo" away the pests, and make ineffective grabs at them as they alight on different parts of your flesh, another sound strikes discordantly on your ear. It is a harsh "caw," loud, defiant, and impudent. The crows have arrived. They assemble in their dozens, talking and quarrelling shrilly with each other, regarding you quizzically with their little black beady eyes. There must be millions of them in Bombay, and they are about as cheeky and cunning as a London street arab. They are called the scavengers of the town, and if they stuck to their work, they would be all right, but they don't. They insist on being present at every out-door function.

Having found you reclining in an easy chair they know you have nothing to throw at them, and they encroach closer and closer, with incessant cawing. Their fiendish ingenuity in annoying you is only equalled by the attention of the mosquitoes, and between the two your evening rest rather loses its zest.

Is it surprising that you suffer from shortness of temper afterwards?



AN EVENING REST.

THE AYAH.

ALTHOUGH this scene might provoke some comment in Hyde Park, yet in Bombay it is one of our commonest sights. The hamal, clad in his best long coat and his shirt-tail flapping in the breeze, pushes the "pram" and quietens the baba, while slightly in the rear comes the Ayah, sailing along like a full-rigged ship, and bringing in tow a refractory youngster, who may—who knows—perhaps in later years become a High Court Judge. But he is as yet quite under the sway of his dusky nurse and has a wholesome regard for the large brown palm, that can smite shrewdly when the Madam-sahib is not in the bungalow.

In her code of morals the Ayah takes the line of least resistance, and she inculcates her principles in her young charges. So successful is she in this that the youngster learns to invent and relate terminological inexactitudes in a naive, unconscious way that quite puts the most wily lawyer in the shade.

Whether this is altogether good for the rising generation is perhaps a question. The young man himself, however, has no doubts at all upon the point. Should his tennis-ball happen to stray into the drawing-room and smash Mother's pet majolica vase, he knows perfectly well what will happen if he is so foolish as to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Therefore he adopts the teachings of his Ayah, and like Brer Rabbit, lies low and says nothing. When he is questioned his look of pained innocence would disarm the suspicions of a Bengali babu, and when he mentions, with evident reluctance at having to "split," that he saw the hamal knock the vase over when he was dusting it, his story is accepted unquestioningly.

Besides teaching that a lie is an ever-present help in time of trouble, the Ayah proves herself a most expert teacher of Hindustani. Although the young hopeful she looks after may hardly be able to speak a word of English, she takes especial care to instruct him minutely and thoroughly in the villainous mixture of slang and errors known as the "Bombay bat." He is thus able to gabble away on all sorts of private and intimate matters to his bosom friends—the hamal, the mali, and the syce.

Fortunately for the future of the youngster his acquaintance with his Ayah does not last long after he gets beyond the age of four or five, and if he is sent to England he promptly forgets every word of Hindustani. Probably, in later years, when he is struggling with his munshi to regain his mastery of the tongue, he will regret his lapse of memory, but really, this was the best thing that ever happened to him.



THE AYAH

THE AYAH.

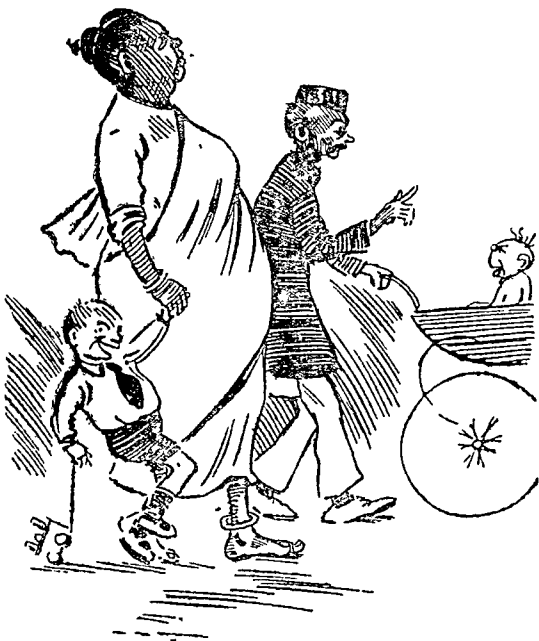
ALTHOUGH this scene might provoke some comment in Hyde Park, yet in Bombay it is one of our commonest sights. The hamal, clad in his best long coat and his shirt-tail flapping in the breeze, pushes the "pram" and quietens the baba, while slightly in the rear comes the Ayah, sailing along like a full-rigged ship, and bringing in tow a refractory youngster, who may—who knows—perhaps in later years become a High Court Judge. But he is as yet quite under the sway of his dusky nurse and has a wholesome regard for the large brown palm, that can smite shrewdly when the Madam-sahib is not in the bungalow.

In her code of morals the Ayah takes the line of least resistance, and she inculcates her principles in her young charges. So successful is she in this that the youngster learns to invent and relate terminological inexactitudes in a naive, unconscious way that quite puts the most wily lawyer in the shade.

Whether this is altogether good for the rising generation is perhaps a question. The young man himself, however, has no doubts at all upon the point. Should his tennis-ball happen to stray into the drawing-room and smash Mother's pet majolica vase, he knows perfectly well what will happen if he is so foolish as to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Therefore he adopts the teachings of his Ayah, and like Brer Rabbit, lies low and says nothing. When he is questioned his look of pained innocence would disarm the suspicions of a Bengali babu, and when he mentions, with evident reluctance at having to "split," that he saw the hamal knock the vase over when he was dusting it, his story is accepted unquestioningly.

Besides teaching that a lie is an ever-present help in time of trouble, the Ayah proves herself a most expert teacher of Hindustani. Although the young hopeful she looks after may hardly be able to speak a word of English, she takes especial care to instruct him minutely and thoroughly in the villainous mixture of slang and errors known as the "Bombay bat." He is thus able to gabble away on all sorts of private and intimate matters to his bosom friends—the hamal, the mali, and the syce.

Fortunately for the future of the youngster his acquaintance with his Ayah does not last long after he gets beyond the age of four or five, and if he is sent to England he promptly forgets every word of Hindustani. Probably, in later years, when he is struggling with his munshi to regain his mastery of the tongue, he will regret his lapse of memory, but really, this was the best thing that ever happened to him.



THE AYAH.

DANCING.

IN India we always like to do that which is least expected of us. Therefore we play cricket in the rains and football when the temperature is anything over 95 deg. Likewise we dance. There are few forms of exercise more heating than the Tango or the Bunny-hug, and though I would not go so far as to assert that these forms of terpsichorean agility are regularly practised in the Indian ball-room, yet the dancers get as near to them as they can.

The young blood just out from Home is invariably a keen devotee of the light fantastic art, and with bended knees and elbows up he slides and curvets and twirls, with his breathless partner tightly clasped to his bosom. With the temperature of the ball-room rather like that of a Turkish-bath, the appearance of the dancers naturally suffers. The ladies, by some means entirely unknown to mere man, manage to retain an outward appearance of comparative coolness and decorum, but their partners become absolute wrecks.

First their collars show signs of weakening and from being immaculate dreams of shining whiteness they become nightmares of invertebrate limpness. Soak a collar in hot water for half-an-hour, and then try and wear it, and you will get some idea of what happens. After the collar comes the shirt. Those broad expansive masses of glazed beauty make a longer fight for it than the collars. They may even last for a couple of vases and the Lancers, but sooner or later they have to throw up the sponge. They melt, thaw, and resolve themselves into pitiful caricatures of their former selves. And the poor body inside them feels as if it were being grilled in a furnace. Dancing in India, as I have shown, is really delightfully fascinating.

Many people go to dances provided with a regular ward-robe of fresh linen, and by continually popping in and out of the dressing-room, like a quick-change artiste on the stage, they manage to keep up a fairly presentable appearance. They miss a good deal of fun, however, ~~and have no time for sitting-out and other appurtenances of dancing~~ which make the exercise supportable to the blasé six-year man.

By Quite a surprisingly large number of elderly men attend balls out in the East. One wonders why, because they never walk a step if they can help it, travelling everywhere in their motor or gharri, and, what is more, they never dance. All they do is to hang about in the vicinity of a room from which come mysterious sounds of corks being extracted from bottles, of ice clinking against glass and of the musical gurgle of liquids poured from one receptacle into another.

At the conclusion of "Auld Lang Syne," as they are assisted into their motors, they declare that old dogs as they are, they can still show the youngsters how to dance!



DANCING.

DOG CHOKRAS.

EVEN the dog in India is equipped with its own servant, who tends to its wants and takes it for walks in the cool of the day.

Probably the dog itself is not altogether in favour of having to tow around a small boy whenever it goes for a walk. Indeed, it is a moot point whether the dog, if given the choice, would not renounce a life of gentility for that of the pariah, which can, at any rate, wander where it likes. Even a sahib's dog, can, however, extract some excitement out of life in Bombay, especially at the present moment, when dog-boys are taking up the game of football with such zest. Half-a-dozen dogs, chained together to a tree, while their respective chokras have been busily engaged in scoring goals, have been known to indulge in as fine a little rough-and-tumble as ever delighted a canine heart.

It is when the chokra has to account to his master for the torn appearance of poor Fido that we realise what resources he has at his command. The Artful Dodger was a child by comparison.

It is rather hard to say exactly what becomes of the dog-boy in after-life. When he first commences earning his own living he is a very small boy, but by the same token he is also very smart and alert. As he continues to grow and his legs and arms begin to shoot out of the dapper little khaki uniforms you provided him with, his mental capacity seems to shrink, so that when he is finally a long-limbed lout he is as devoid of brains as a water buffalo. So you get another dog-boy, who goes through exactly the same process in a year or two, and "wears out" in the same manner.

Apparently some dog-boys graduate into hamals, and from thence into fully-fledged boys, but they cannot all do this, for one hamal will outlast twenty dog-chokras. Perhaps some of them go down in the social scale, and degenerate into common or garden coolies, which explains a lot.



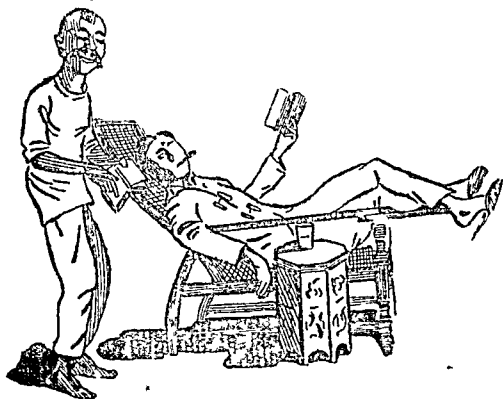
DOG CHOKRAS

THE MISTRI.

THE cook is called a "mistri," and he certainly merits the title. He is at continual warfare with his employers, and the nightly interview after dinner invariably ends by his giving immediate notice, or being assisted out of the room on the end of a boot. Most mistris amass fortunes in a few years, and retire on a competence, while their former masters struggle in a sea of debt.

A mistri can seldom cook food, but he is without equal in cooking accounts. A lump sum is given him every day and he goes to the market, and returns with what food he considers necessary. A leaden-coloured tasteless fluid he will call "chicken eshoup" and in proof of this will charge you Rs 2 for chickens. To him beef, mutton, veal, or lamb are always in season, since the humble "buckra," or goat, is invariably to be had at the market, though if accused of serving up goat under the cognomen of mutton he will deny the charge, with the air of an injured saint.

No sahib has ever been known to penetrate to the awful fastnesses of the kitchen, and therefore he can still continue to eat the dishes served up. Memsahibs, however, occasionally look in—were husbands fear to tread, and that is the reason why the women-folk in India eat so sparingly. The state of the kitchen depends on the age of the building. The mistri cannot cook if the refuse and odds and ends are thrown away, so these accumulate in the kitchen for all time, or until the building is pulled down through sheer senile decay. But perhaps I had better draw a veil over so painful a subject, since I have no wish to destroy what little appetite my readers may still have for their dinners.



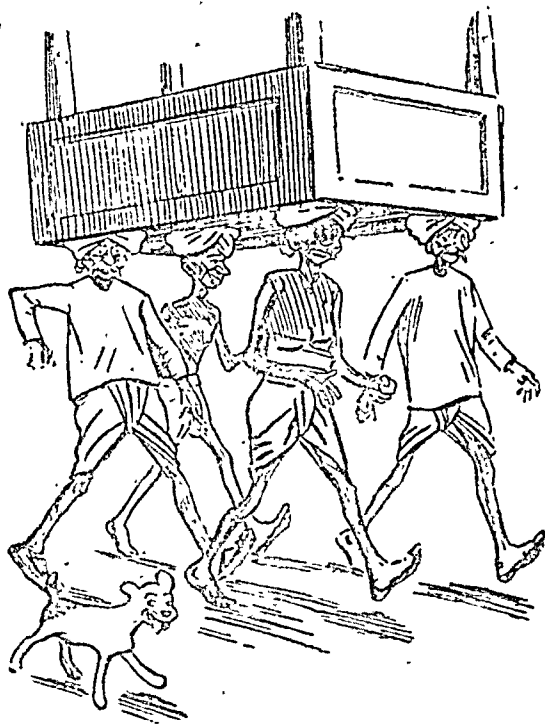
THE "MISTRI."

OUR FURNITURE "VANS."

IS there a furniture-van in Bombay? I don't believe there is; certainly I've never seen one. We have human pantechnicons here. The sight of half-a-dozen perspiring coolies trotting through the town bearing a grand-piano on their heads would set all London agape, and would keep the picture papers busy for a week. In Bombay it is one of our commonest sights, and no one takes any notice of it. We must except the new-comer, of course, and he invariably devotes a page of his first letter Home to describing the phenomenon. And when we come to think of it, it is rather remarkable. Fancy retaining in proud and progressive Bombay the earliest method of transporting goods ever known to man! We cannot go further back than Adam, and he certainly must have made use of the method.

Drive through the streets at any hour of the day, and you will see coolies carrying on their heads a mountainous pile of furniture seemingly heavy enough to break the back of the strongest elephant. It does not seem to distress them, and they do not appear to suffer from head-aches afterwards. How do they get the grand-piano hoisted up on to their craniums? How do they set it down? How is it they never fall, and bring the load crashing to the ground like a building in an earthquake? They have such thin spindle shanks, too, that one would think they would snap under the weight; true, most of them seem to be warped outward a trifle.

It is a curious commentary on life in the East that the prehistoric and the ultra-modern mingle in our thoroughfares without causing a single comment, or the raising of a single eye-brow. It is said that you cannot hurry the Indian coolie, but the transport coolies have to hurry. The heavier the articles they bear on their heads the quicker they travel. My idea is that they trot at a rapid pace because the man in front gets the notion that he is going too slowly and that the load will slip off and crush him. He increases his pace; the others have perforce to do ditto, and thus with gathering speed they canter through the streets. If they had a really long journey to do I believe they would arrive at their destination like a hundred-yards sprinter finishing at the tape, and in return they probably get an anna or two apiece for the journey. Coolie labour is so expensive in Bombay, you see.



FURNITURE VANS

GOING HOME.

Going Home!

What effect does that phrase have upon you when you really seriously give yourself up to contemplation of it? What thrills do you experience when you step aboard the trim P. and O. steamer and Bombay's low-lying buildings gradually sink behind the horizon? Are you glad or sorry? Both, I believe. But what about that first glimpse of Dover's chalk cliffs, crowned by the grey castle? As you see the details emerge, your last sight of it suddenly comes back to you as if it were but yesterday. There are a few events in a man's life that he will never forget. His first sight of foggy old England after a long exile in blazing sun-baked lands is one of them.

Where the unattached youngster is concerned, the wonder is that he ever gets Home at all. For a month before he is due to sail he has to attend burra-khanas and various other joyful little functions, so that when he finally passes the doctor, and goes aboard the launch for the ship he is not exactly in the pink of health.

Not so long ago a certain worthy celebrated his Home-going so conscientiously and completely, and attended so many farewell dinners, that when he presented himself before the medical officer at Bombay, he had to be assisted there by his friends. The doctor nearly jumped out of his chair with excitement when he saw the glassy-eyed, sallow-visaged wreck before him.

"Gad!" he ejaculated "you're in a bad way."

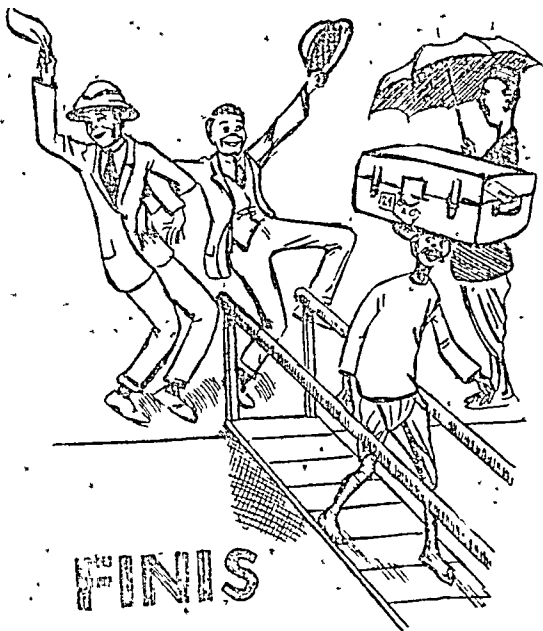
"No, no, Doc," assured the other in husky voice, and waving a palsied hand.

"Nonsense, you'll be dead to-morrow," replied the doctor in a brutally complacent way, "no use you going aboard; funerals at sea upset the rest of the passengers."

The upshot was that the intending passenger had to go by the next week's boat, in chase of his luggage, and he swears with considerable feeling that when he next goes Home he will not attend a single farewell festivity, however much his friends may entreat.

Probably, however, he was an exception, and most of us feel a wonderful elation when we step aboard the launch at Ballard Pier, and make for the waiting mail-steamer, with the call of the West ringing in our ears. The call of the East may be strong, but that of the West is stronger.

It is only when we finally retire that we realise the true fascination of India!



GOING HOME